

hence one erratic record would seem too trivial for publication, but it has occurred to me that the note I now make may possibly be of comparative interest. Black-poll Warblers are usually the last of the warblers to reach the District of Columbia in spring. They are likewise among the last to leave it. Singularly enough, in the spring of 1907 they were a little in advance of their average date of arrival. They lingered in more or less abundance throughout the first ten days of June. I recorded the last on June 16, in the grounds of the National Zoölogical Park. The latest record theretofore was June 6, 1875, but this was not strictly a District record, having been made at Rosslyn, just across the Potomac River, in Virginia.—R. W. WILLIAMS, JR., *Washington, D. C.*

The Cañon Wren in Colorado.—As I believe this Cañon Wren (*Catherpes mexicanus conspersus*) is considered rather rare in Colorado, the following note may be of interest. February 22, 1907, I obtained a pair of these Wrens in a small rocky gulch about two miles south of Golden. Both seemed rather shy, but after shooting the first one the other remained around the same spot so that I was able to obtain it. October 10, while in the same gulch I saw another Cañon Wren near where I had obtained the two in February. I think it probable that these birds breed in this locality and perhaps are not as rare as has been supposed.—CHARLES D. TEST, *Golden, Col.*

Red-spotted Bluethroat of Alaska.—While not at all questioning the correctness of Dr. Buturlin's opinion that the Bluethroat of Alaska is different from that of Northern Europe (see Auk, January, 1908, pp. 35-37), I wish to state that both the description and measurements in 'Birds of North and Middle America' (Vol. IV, p. 15) were taken from European specimens, and that I have not seen specimens from either Alaska or eastern Siberia. Of course I should have so stated in the work mentioned, but unfortunately neglected to do so.—ROBERT RIDGWAY, *Washington, D. C.*

A Black Robin and its Albinistic Tendencies.—In November last my attention was called to a caged Robin in this city that had suddenly turned black. I found the bird to be a lively, pugnacious and apparently healthy robin exhibiting a very complete case of melanism. Its plumage was jet black except for a few small, white under tail coverts, apparently two in number, and that when facing the light and viewed at a certain angle the breast feathers appeared to be terminally banded with blackish brown not distinguishable in other positions. The eye-ring was not noticeable, bill nearly black, anterior surfaces of tarsi and dorsi of toes heavily pigmented with blackish slate while the plantar surfaces of these were whitish flesh slightly interrupted by slate color.

The history of this bird, as given me by its owner and corroborated by a local physician who has known it for the last three and a half years, is

that it was taken as an abandoned nestling some four years previous and kept in a large cage hung in a kitchen and fed on a diet of ground hemp, grated carrot and cornmeal varied by an occasional small bit of apple, a minute quantity of scraped raw meat about once a week, and in spring time occasional meals of angle worms. Thirteen months ago last November the robin was moved from its original habitat to its present home where it hangs in a large wire cage suspended about five feet from the floor in front of a south window in a rather low kitchen. The room is not used for washing, and but little cooking is said to be done in it, and its temperature is said to be cool; but not unlikely it may be a little higher and more humid than normal.

Up to the latter part of last September, when its moult began, the robin had been in rather bright, normal coloration which at once gave place to the extreme melanistic phase that it had assumed about two weeks previous to my seeing it, November 6. Again, on January 28, I called to see the robin and found that the black pigmentation of the bill had almost entirely disappeared and that it was bright yellow except for a dusky spot near the tip of the culmen, a change that I was told had occurred within the preceding four days. The eye-rings were then conspicuous, appearing whitish at a distance but really greenish yellow. The tarsi and toes were decidedly lighter, the pigment of the former seeming to have formed ill-defined spots. About a week previous to this inspection white feathers were noticed by the owner in several parts of the plumage as the bird sat with erected feathers after bathing. I could see a number of these, imperfectly covered by the black ones, and a faint indication of fine white streaking, probably due to underlying white feathers, was seen on the breast. On February 10 I again viewed the robin and found the dusky spot on its culmen farther reduced, and there were then apparently three or four white under tail coverts. As the bird is lively and attempts always to face an observer it was impracticable to determine whether there was a farther increase in the underlying white feathers of the body and neck.

Coues¹ mentions a black robin turning white, and Barrows² mentions a robin "somewhat variegated with black and white, the black predominating above, though Mr. Leonard thinks the bird became ultimately almost white."

It appears that in the majority of black captive robins there has been a succeeding albinistic phase.

As melanism is due to an abnormal increase in black pigment or melanin it seems but natural to suppose that a more or less lengthy persistence of such a condition would produce an exhaustion of the supply and of the ability to renew it which would result in albinism more or less complete, depending on the degree of exhaustion. There is, I believe, little data to support such a theory and it would have to be obtained experimentally

¹ Coues, Elliott, Bull. Nutt. Ornith. Club, Vol. III, p. 48.

² Barrows, Walter B., Auk, Vol. II, p. 303.

much as Beebe¹ has obtained that indicating the probable inducing causes of melanism in caged birds subjected to slightly abnormal degrees of heat and humidity; a result in conformity with Faxon's² hint of over twenty years ago. — HENRY L. WARD, *Milwaukee, Wis.*

An Interesting Audubon Specimen.— It has long been known that many of Audubon's specimens were deposited in the Charleston Museum toward the close of 1850. Lack of space forbids going into details, so it must suffice to say that, while it is certain that these specimens were at one time in this Museum, we do not know just what species were represented and, until recently, had been unable to find any trace of Audubon's birds among our collections — which contain many very old specimens. Probably most of the records and perhaps most of the specimens were among material destroyed during the Civil War. Recently, however, while examining some old and damaged specimens which had been stored away for many years, I found a bird which is apparently an Audubon specimen. It bears two labels. The first, a piece of cardboard tied to the bird's leg, reads as follows:

“*Loxia maculata* Gmelin
Spotted Grosbeak — Pennant”

The second, consisting of a scrap of paper folded up and attached to the string of the other label, bears the inscription:

“Black Hills
Male
June 3 — 34
J. K. Townsend”

Mr. Witmer Stone has kindly examined both these labels and informs me that the second one is in Townsend's handwriting.

The specimen is in reality a representative of the Black-headed Grosbeak — *Zamelodia melanocephala* (Swainson). The assumption that it is an Audubon specimen is based on the following facts:— (1) that some of Audubon's birds were once in this Museum; (2) that Audubon received some of the Western birds from which he drew his figures from Townsend and that these birds of Townsend's were examined and figured by Audubon in Charleston in 1836 (see *Ornith. Biog.*, Vol. IV, *Introd.* pp. xii-xiv); (3) that this specimen was taken by Townsend on the same day, month, and year and in the same locality as the female Evening Grosbeak figured by Audubon and received by him from Townsend (see *Ornith. Biog.*, IV, p. 517).

In his ‘Narrative of a Journey across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River . . . with a Scientific Appendix,’ published in 1839, Townsend lists, among the birds collected, Mottled or Spotted Grosbeak, *Fringilla*

¹ Beebe, C. William, *Zoologica*, Vol. 1, part 1.

² Faxon, Walter, *Auk*, Vol. III, p. 284. Other citations of black robins: Ruthven Deane, *B. N. O. C.*, Vol. I, p. 24; Barrows, *Auk*, Vol. 1, p. 90.